

Charles (Pete) Barnum, the
Wild Horse King

Chief of "Mustangers" Tells of the Science of Catching and Breaking Animals of the Herd of 15,000 That Still Roam the Mountains and Deserts—Most Romantic Occupation in the West

By Charles (Pete) Barnum,
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NEVADA is the only one of our States in which wild horses can still be found in such numbers as to justify men in making a business of capturing them. That they are "sure wild" is attested by the fact that the United States Department of Forestry seriously considered the plan of shooting the fifteen thousand head which ranged in the Toiyabe National Forest, believing that it was impossible to capture them.

In the counties of Elko, Eureka, Nye, Lander and White Pine, where the horses are most numerous, are men, "mustangers," they are called, who spend twelve months in every year either in catching these wild horses or else planning or preparing for their capture.

Those who follow the work are men who, besides being natural lovers of horses, crave the outdoor life which the occupation supplies. "It is sure enough out of doors," said one mustanger recently, "for we haven't even had a tent with us in the last four months."

A good hand at the work must not only be a fearless rider, but he able to shoe a string of horses, prepare a quick meal for himself or a dozen men, bind a pack onto a "bronk" so it will never turn, or follow the trail of a band of wild horses while riding at a lope, even though there may be hundreds of other tracks on every side.

Excepting those horses trapped while drinking at fenced water holes, the mustangers either run the wild horses down or chase them into a hand of gentle horses or into corrals concealed in trails which the horses use in travelling from place to place.

Task Requires Trained Men.

To do this successfully requires a large string of seasoned saddle horses and men who know not only the country and the nature of wild horses but who are willing to accept the danger encountered in outrunning these mustangers upon their own ranges, for to capture them the riders must actually outrun them, generally on the roughest mountains, where loose or jagged rocks, huge boulders and dead or scrub timber are constantly in one's way.

In making the long runs which are necessary to exhaust a frightened bunch of wild horses the saddle horses are generally forced to run up hill and down from five to ten miles; frequent runs of twenty miles and even more are made. To obtain horses that can pack a man and his rig—the saddle alone will weigh sixty pounds—the leaders of the mustang bands are chosen. These are stallions which have attained unusual development, for daily they are fighting off some challenging stud, racing here and there herding their mares, investigating every strange scent or object, all of which builds up muscles not found in their followers necessary to perform the work in catching other hands.

Doubtless this constitutes as hard a task as horses are called upon to perform in any part of the world, for a band once started is pursued by only one man at a time, and if the run is to be successful the rider must travel at a speed equal to that of the band, and must outrun the leaders whenever the attempt is made to turn the bunch toward the man stationed to relieve him.

These mustangs are classed either as valley or mountain horses. Those reared on the flats are readily distinguished by their large, broad hoofs. The mountain

Getting Him Used to Having Men About Him

Horses have hoofs much like those of a mule and are more often chosen for saddle horses by men experienced in this business, for they are as speedy in a valley as the horses ranging there, while in the rocks they will carry a man safely through places at top speed where a valley horse would hesitate or perhaps refuse to go.

The animals reared in the lower altitude, in the level country, attain larger size and are sometimes more beautifully proportioned, but if broken to the mustang service are used almost exclusively on the big level stretches; any variation to this rule is apt to bring discomfort, if not worse, to the rider.

I have a thousand pound valley horse, a sorrel, in my string possessed of unusual speed for short distances. Last summer while running to a blind corral which had been erected on the summit of a towering range of mountains I decided to use this horse on the final dash into the wings of the corral. This necessitated a run of about one-quarter of a mile down a steep but uniform grade upon which there were no large boulders, but the entire surface of the ridge was covered with loose flat rocks, the smallest of which were about as large as a saucer, while the larger ones would measure two feet across. On such footing a mountain mustang would cut loose and jump further and faster at every bound.

Indeed, they did this. Eighteen head were brought in by the relay riders. Long before they reached my station I saw them winding down the trails on the side of the mountain opposite me.

Through my glasses I saw the half breed Shoshone quiting his nery pony as he bounded down the slope, which was almost straight down, yet above me. He was endeavoring to beat the leader of the band to a trail branching off upon another ridge which led away from our corral.

The last half mile was an even race, the stallion in the lead exhausting every effort to outdistance the Indian who ran beside him so persistently. When there were but twenty yards to run before the trail was reached I saw the Shoshone work spur and quit, and as a last resort he grabbed his hat from his head and threw it into the face of the stallion, which, startled by the strange object, turned and came directly toward the clump of mahoganies which hid me.

Straight at me they came, the big black tailed buckskin stud leading. I counted them as they passed, and in doing so delayed my start a few seconds too long, but I had confidence in the speed of my horse, and on a loose rein my sorrel bounded at them like an arrow shot from a bow. In fifty yards I had overtaken the leader, which at sight of me seemed to double his speed. Neck and neck we went down through that mass of rocks, my valley horse running without reserve.

I hoped some of the boys who had tried to dissuade me from riding him on rough ground could see the magnificent run he was making. The buckskin leader let himself out another notch, and I spurred my sorrel. Half a dozen leaps and we would be in the mouth of the wings; then, without apparent slip or stumble, down went my horse! Right under the mustangs we fell. I cleared from my rigging just as my sorrel crashed past me, rolling over and over, finally landing on his side with his head buried so completely under him that it was impossible to see any portion of it.

I glanced up and saw the Indian reining in his pony. "Don't stop! Crowd those mustangs!" I shouted, but it was too late.

TRAPPING WILD HORSES on the NEVADA PLAINS

"stay," that can make a spurt when called upon to do so, and he will care not what is its size, color or disposition. Horses of known speed and endurance, experienced in this work, are often sold at prices so high that they seem out of reason. Mounts that one would be ashamed to ride through

worth from \$50 to \$500, what matters a few dollars in the price of the horse?

In a "mustanger's string" will be found rope horses, road horses, long and short distance horses. His valley and mountain horses and "colts"—often his best horse—will have to be thrown every time a bridle or saddle is fastened on. There are but two questions the expert will ask regarding his mount—Can he run (fast)? Can he stay (at it a long time)?

"Colt" is the term applied in the wild horse country to any horse whose education is incomplete. It refers not to age. Often a stallion is caught that is twelve or more years old, yet if he possesses some qualification admired by one of the outfit he will be "broken" for the service, and always during the process he will be referred to as a "colt."

To that branch of work best suited to him each horse will be assigned. The road horses are used for the rides across country seeking mustangs or camping places and the long drives to the railroad with the mustangs; the rope horses are seldom used for any class of work except roping, in corral or outside.

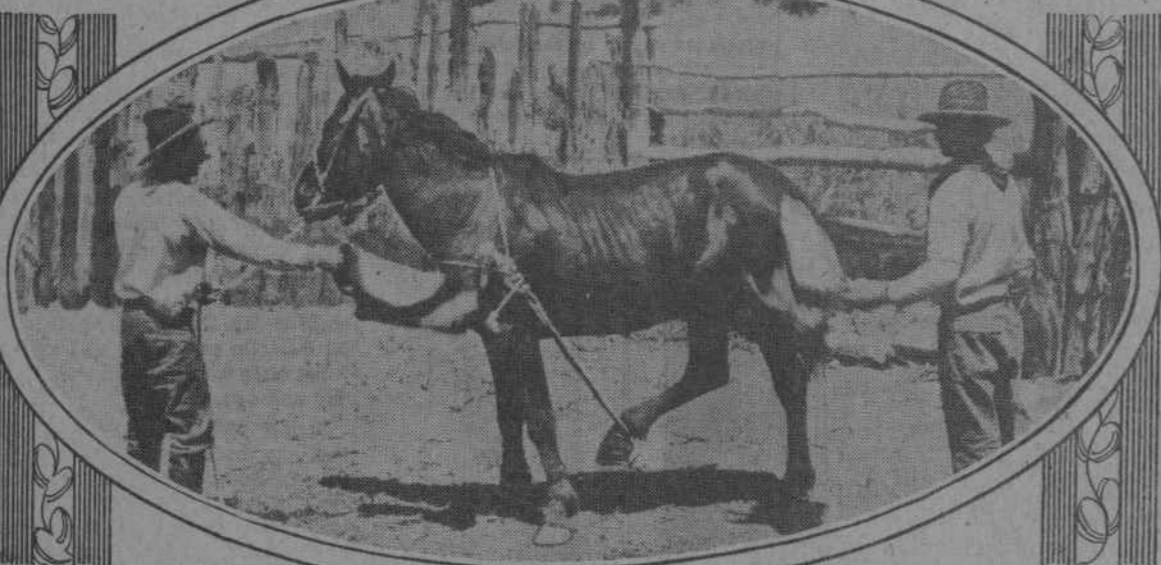
People unacquainted with the work imagine that the saddle stock must be as high spirited and as mettlesome as a stable fed race horse. There are such horses in

lazy, indifferent old plug that can be made to run and he will choose the latter.

Put an average rider on some of these veterans and start him out across country, and before he has ridden a half dozen miles he will swear he could walk backward faster and further than this horse could carry him. Let him ride in sight of a band of mustangs, feeding away off in the distance. The old horse will see them long before his "master" dreams of their presence. Possibly the first hint the rider receives will be when the old horse points his ears forward and perceptibly increases his gait. When that band of wild horses starts, look out, for that old horse that paid no attention to whip or spur a few moments ago will now give you a ride that will make the hair stand on end. The way he will just miss that big badger hole, skim over a fallen log or leap among the brush and

foothills and started to climb the mountains near Fish Creek Wells they turned and ran due west through the low hills which led back into Antelope Valley. The third rider took up the trail at this point. Already they had traversed more than twenty miles, but were running as steadily as a locomotive down grade. Eight miles west the fourth relay joined the chase, and on this run the hardest race was fought. The grays endeavored by every artifice to get into the mountains on this side of the valley. They gave the mounted men an exceedingly hard run as the fifth pursuer relieved his predecessor.

Old Warrior, who had been ahead all the way, now dropped to the rear and Chief took the lead. Immediately he turned toward his old range far across this big broad valley. As relentless as a shadow followed the rider. Fully thirty miles had the grays run. The new man



Downing a Horse in Order to Saddle Him a Common and Necessary Procedure

My fall cost us fourteen head. The buckskin leader and the three directly behind him had no chance to dodge the wings, but all the remainder turned around me and my prostrate horse and fled past the end of the wing. We examined their tracks. The horse running furthest out had missed the end of the wing by six feet.

In selecting horses to be used in this work the prime requisite is endurance. The saddle horses that can keep up a long, steady lope and make an occasional dash are the ones that bring the mustangs to the corral. A horse seasoned to this mustang work will run at top speed for miles, then regain his wind while travelling at a pace that would totally exhaust an ordinary horse.

Next to endurance in importance is speed, for there are times when one's mount must jump out like a quarter horse. Give a mustanger an animal that can

city streets sell for hundreds of dollars among men in the business. He may be old, big headed, raw boned, off color, rough gaited and mean, but if he can be depended upon to run down a bunch of mustangs



For Years This Stallion Led a Band of Wild Horses That Often Escaped Their Pursuers

Nevada, but they are not desirable in the mustang work, for they wear out themselves and their riders before accomplishing the end sought. Give a mustanger his choice between one of these prancing, bow-necked, impatient beauties and a homely,



The Mustanger Heading for the Wild Horse Country

rocks, especially down hill, will cause the memory of all previous rides to be banished from the mind forever.

Mount a man unacquainted with this work upon the best horse in this or any other State and tell him to run down a band of wild horses and he will fail. He may be a fearless rider, possess wonderful endurance; he may pursue the hand until they become so worn out that it is an effort to trot. If that stage be reached, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the beginner's horse is down to a walk, and after a nerve racking, body exhausting ride, covering many hours, and an almost unbelievable number of miles, he sees his quarry slowly disappear over a ridge which his horse is unable to climb.

The men who best understand how to save their horses bring in the greatest number of mustangs. It is by going around the mountain that the wild horses are climbing, else making a slow diagonal ascent, then picking up the trail and following it at top speed down hill, that the mustanger wears out the horses he is pursuing. Knowledge of a range is a valuable aid, for many times one may save his horse just that little that is necessary to win the next heat by making a short cut to a known trail.

But when riding in a new country a mustanger almost invariably follows the trail of the wild horses, although their route may seem to twist and turn unnecessarily and be so rough that it seems foolhardy for a human being to ride over it even at a walk, yet if you leave that trail and try to pick out a straighter or smoother path you will find that although the mustang trail is rough, the rest of the country is rougher, for the mustangs always take the best.

Capture of Warrior and Chief.

To start a fresh bunch of wild horses and actually run all of them down generally requires two or three days' time, and is attempted only when it is desired to capture some exceptional individual or band. Strangely enough, it is our own saddle horses which most often have to be taken in this way.

All horses are turned loose upon the open range in the fall. When these horses become thoroughly rested and regain a good coat of fat upon their ribs some of them are much harder to catch than the wild mustangs. No matter how gentle a horse may have been, when free upon these boundless areas he may use some of the tricks to evade being caught which he has seen and helped the mustanger perform.

Two of our gentlest saddle horses, grays, named Warrior and Chief, for two years evaded all our attempts to catch them by usual methods. So when we started our work last spring it was decided to run them down if it took a week to do it. They could be seen any day in the foothills on the east side of Antelope Valley, but they had invariably gotten away by taking to the mountains, then travelling through rocks and low timber where the trail would be lost among the tracks of other bands of horses.

Allison, a man whose life has been spent among these wild horses, famous in this and neighboring counties as a trapper, even surpassing some of the keenest visioned fullblood Indians, was put upon their trail and given the first heat. At a good brisk lope he started them. Through the canyons and over the hills they went, crossing the summit of the range, going to another valley on the opposite side, running all ways, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, but far out behind them doggedly trailed Allison. When they came into the valley and a second man took up the chase old Warrior and his partner kicked up their heels and ran as though at play, striding out across the flat in an easterly direction.

Twelve measured miles it is to the mountains on the opposite side, but they never slackened their pace. As they reached the

showed no mercy, but spurred his horse to his best. On a keen jump went the now distressed and half crazy animals. Warrior was ready to quit, but Chief bounded along, his white coat now muddy from the mixture of alkali dust and perspiration. At any attempt to slacken the pace the relay pressed the harder, for away off in the uncertain distance he saw a speck he knew to be his relief. As he neared that speck he saw it was Allison, mounted on the fleetest horse in our outfit.

Like a hawk after a gopher Allison darted out to make the final run. Either horse could have been easily roped now. Doubtless they would have welcomed the procedure, but that was not the plan. For two years they had escaped by running away; this time they were to get all the run they wanted; if it was not possible to make them quit in one day, then two would be taken. The appearance of the last man was too much; they saw the uselessness of the struggle. Old Warrior threw up his tail, stopped, looked around and whinnied. Chief looked back at his partner, then glanced at their pursuer, hesitated a moment as if to consider the expediency of further effort—then trotted back to the spot where Warrior stood and awaited the coming of his captor.

Four days later I saw a little five-year-old Indian girl tugging at Warrior's mane, endeavoring to climb upon his back, gripping his front leg with her knees in about the same manner as a youngster climbs a tree. The horse that ran forty miles rather than allow a man to catch him stood now, wholly unfettered, totally indifferent to the struggles of the child.

A Wonderful Run.

While running on Table Mountain, in Lander county, recently we noticed a dark chestnut horse carrying saddle marks upon his back. He led a bunch of eight head, and as he ran he was never less than two hundred yards ahead of his bunch.

"That's Rabbit Sam's single footer," said one of the riders. "I know him; he got away from us in Savery Canyon just seven years ago."

Rabbit Sam was with us and wanted his horse. We had built a corral on one of the ridges leading down from Table Mountain, and by some clever work and hard riding this single footer and his bunch were chased to the corral, but escaped by jumping the wings.

"Let's show him he can be caught," suggested some one.

The following morning a halfbreed Shoshone, well mounted, took up their trail, and after coming up to the band ran them until dark that night.

Two men changed mounts and gave the chestnut and his band no rest. At sunrise next day the horses were found less than a mile from where the chase had been abandoned the night before, having only a little spring for water. At eight o'clock that evening the chestnut and his bunch were again followed by the outfit doggedly followed.

Most of the riding was at a trot, the mountains were extremely precipitous and rough. It was not hard to trail the chestnut and his bunch, for the chestnut had torn their heels so badly that blood gushed from them at nearly every step.

Just as darkness was coming on the evening of the second day of the chase, but really the third day the band had been pursued, and when but one of the original band remained with the chestnut leader, a rider closed in on the almost exhausted animal, roped him and rode him into camp.

As we looked him over the following morning, commenting on his wonderful limbs, his fine, sensitive head, enormous depth of chest and wealth of muscles, a vaquero remarked that the horse had indeed made a wonderful run.

"Run!" answered another. "Why shouldn't he run? He's had seven years' rest!"

Concerning Cases of Suspected Hydrophobia.

(From the European Edition of the Herald.) WHEN hydrophobia is suspected the case must always be treated from observations both of the person bitten and the animal supposed to be affected by rabies. These observations are very clearly dealt with by Dr. Gryse in a well informed memoir recently published by the Echo Medical du Nord.

The method to be followed in cases of bites by an animal suffering from or suspected to be affected by rabies is the practice adopted by the Pasteur Institute of Lille. If the animal is manifestly rabid there can be no doubt about the matter, and the subject bitten should immediately be sent for treatment to the Pasteur Institute.

But if the symptoms presented by the animal are not definite it is advisable to defer treatment for a period of ten days. During this time the animal should be examined by a veterinary surgeon. When the animal is really affected by rabies definite symptoms will appear and the death of the animal will soon supervene, for rabies develops in dogs in from four to six days at the most.

In any event, an animal which has bitten some one ought never to be killed before having undergone this period of observation. It is impossible, in fact, after death to affirm the existence of rabies simply by the evidence of an autopsy. Only the inoculation in a rabbit of a part of the brain of the animal suspected can furnish a definite diagnosis, but this is unfortunately too late, as it requires two or three weeks.

It is therefore prudent to recommend treatment for hydrophobia every time that an animal which has bitten any one has been killed. The same course should evidently be followed in cases of bites by an unknown dog.

Dr. Gryse resumes and completes these principles as follows:— Cases where the treatment must be recommended:— Person bitten.—When the skin has been

more or less cut by the teeth of the animal. When a wound or scratch has been licked by a rabid animal.

Animal which has bitten.—When it has been killed less than ten days after the bite. When it has died, disappeared or is unknown. When it presents symptoms of rabies. When it dies from rabies while under observation.

Cases where treatment is needless:— Person bitten.—When the individual has been bitten through his clothes and these have not been pierced by the teeth of the animal.

Animal which has bitten.—When it is alive and in good health ten days after the bite. When the integuments present no fraying.

In general, whenever there is any doubt

Cure of Child Blind from Birth.

(From the European Edition of the Herald.) M. MOREAU, of Saint-Etienne, has performed an operation for double congenital cataract on a child of eight years who perceived the sensation of light but not of colored light.

During the days immediately succeeding the operation the child, literally frightened by the flood of new sensations, made no attempt to interpret them. It was necessary to make him the object of a long and difficult training, which required months and lavish patience to render complete.

The first visual differentiation was that of light from dark and the contours of different objects familiar to him by touch. The knowledge of shape was difficult to acquire, and progress was made only when the sensations of color were distinguished.

At present the child, both of whose eyes were operated upon, enjoys perfect sight and has been able to learn to read. Dr. Moreau is of opinion that if he had not undertaken this difficult training the patient would still be practically blind and would not have been able to use his eyes.

it is necessary to institute treatment. By so doing it is true there is a risk of needless treatment, but there is no inconvenience in this respect, since the preventive injections are absolutely harmless.

No ill results have ever been observed in the case of the numerous doctors or their assistants who in the laboratories where the anti-hydrophobic inoculation is prepared have voluntarily submitted to preventive treatment by means of these inoculations without having really been bitten themselves.

In any case prevention is better than cure, and when it is a question of hydrophobia nothing is easier than prevention, for hydrophobia is propagated and perpetuated solely by stray dogs. It is extremely simple to get rid of stray dogs by enforcing the laws and regulations which exist in connection with this subject, particularly in France. (The law, in fact, prescribes the immediate slaughter of any dog bitten or infected by a rabid dog.)

If these regulations were strictly applied they would suffice to stamp out hydrophobia. But it is impossible to know exactly what dogs have been bitten, and it is especially difficult to distinguish stray dogs or those having neither owner nor domicile.

French law rightly stipulates that every dog on the public roads should be provided with a collar bearing the name and address of its owner, but in practice it is impossible to insure that this regulation is strictly observed.

Another and more practical solution is to insist upon the rigorous collection of the dog tax by the "medal system." For this purpose every dog should be declared at the mairie by its owner, who receives a medal which is to be attached to the dog's collar. The medal bears a number which is recorded in a register. Opposite each number in the register is written the name of the owner. Every dog not bearing this medal would ipso facto be considered as straying and would be consigned.